

## INSIDE TODAY

### WORLD NEWS

#### NO RESTRICTIONS



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pauses during a meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, not seen, in Jerusalem, Sunday, March 21, 2010. U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon, who was touring the Gaza Strip Sunday wants a nearly three-year blockade of Gaza lifted.

Read more on Page A6


## SPORTS NEWS

#### BRISTOL ROMP



Jimmie Johnson raises the trophy in victory lane with help from Food City president Steve Smith, left, after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series' Food City 500 auto race at Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tenn., Sunday, March 21, 2010.

Read more on Page A13



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Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California holding the gavel used to pass Medicare Reform, walks across the street and into the U.S. Capitol after a House Democratic caucus as the House prepares to vote on health care reform in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Sunday, March 21, 2010. Walking with Speaker Pelosi are from left, Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., and Rep. John Larson, D-Conn.

Associated Press

## Obama, Democrats secure votes for health care bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama and House Democratic leaders struck a last-minute deal Sunday with abortion foes to secure the final few votes needed to remake America's health care system, writing a climactic chapter in a century-old quest for near universal coverage. The House argued its way through a thicket of Republican objections toward an evening vote on the bill to extend coverage to 32 million Americans who lack it, ban insurers from denying coverage on the basis of pre-existing medical conditions and cut deficits by an estimated \$138 billion over a decade. Passage of a central health care bill already cleared by the Senate would send it

to Obama for his signature. That still would leave one more step, a companion package of changes that would go to the Senate.

In the first of three showdown votes Sunday, a "rule" to establish guidelines for the ensuing health care debate was approved by a 224-206 margin. That indicated the Democratic leadership had the votes for later approving the Senate-passed bill and then the fix-it bill. Its passage would set up a final showdown in the Senate in the days ahead, where Majority Leader Harry Reid says at least 50 votes are in hand for its final approval under a fast-track procedure known as reconciliation.

Continued on Page 4



In this Sept. 23, 2002 file photo, Stewart Udall, former interior secretary and three-term Arizona congressman, sits in his home in Santa Fe, N.M. Stewart Udall, who sowed the seeds of the modern environmental movement as secretary of the interior during the 1960s and later became a crusader for victims of radiation exposure from the government's Cold War nuclear programs, died Saturday. He was 90.

Associated Press

## Former Interior Secretary Udall dies at age 90

By BARRY MASSEY

Associated Press Writer

SANTA FE, N.M. — Stewart Udall, an elder in a famed political family who led the Interior Department as it promoted an expansion of public lands and helped win passage of major environmental laws, has died at the age of 90.

During his 1961-1968 tenure as interior secretary, Udall sowed the seeds of the modern environmental movement. He later became a crusader for victims of radiation exposure from the government's Cold War nuclear programs.

Continued on Next Page



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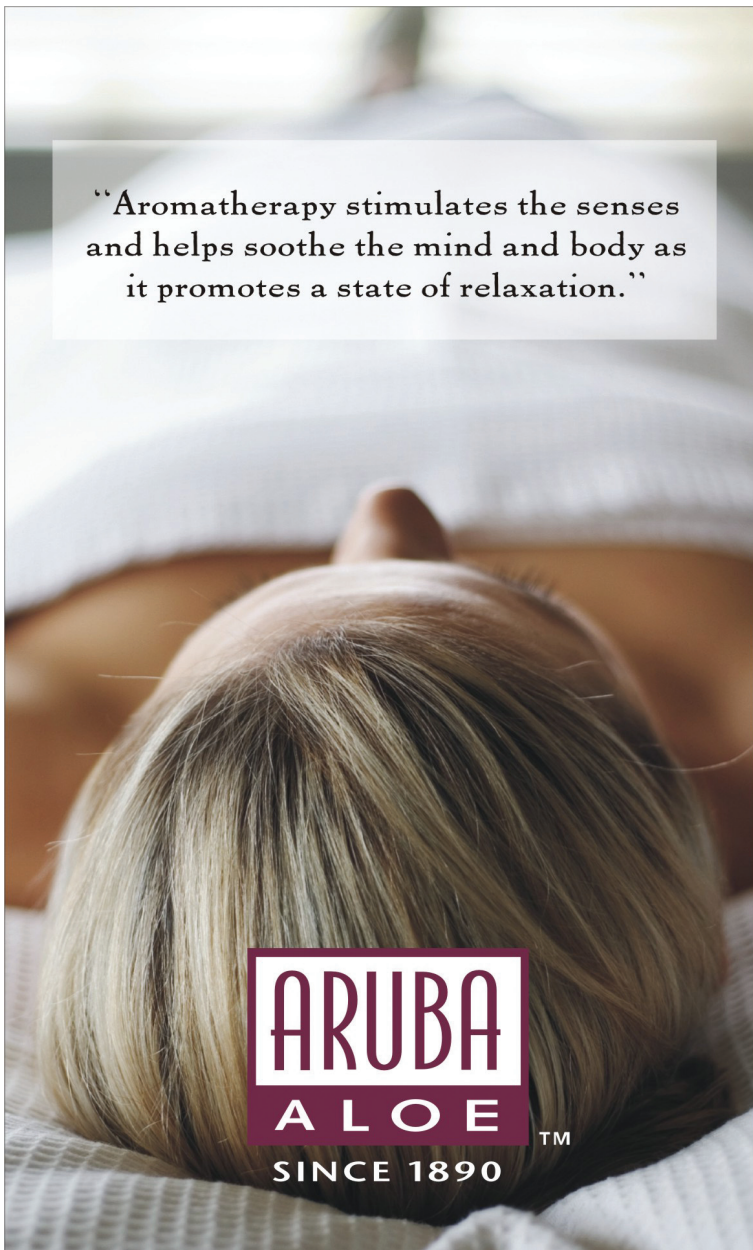
**UDALL**

**Continued from Front Page**

President Obama praised Udall's service. "Whether in the skies above Italy in World War II, in Congress or as secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall left an indelible mark on this nation and inspired countless Americans who will continue his fight for clean air, clean water and to maintain our many natural treasures," he said. Udall died of natural causes Saturday at his home in Santa Fe, surrounded by his children and their families, according to statement released through the office of his son, Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M. Udall, brother of the late 15-term congressman Morris Udall, served six years in Congress as a Democrat from Arizona, and then headed the Interior Department from 1961 through 1968 under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. His son Tom and nephew Mark also became congressmen, then both were elected to the Senate in 2008. Udall helped write several of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation, including the Wilderness Act of 1964, which protects millions of acres from logging, mining and other development. "I never lost an argument with the budget people under either Kennedy or Johnson. If you had a new national park or a new policy on wilderness or something on wild rivers ... they'd say, 'Go ahead. It's a good idea,'" Udall once said in an interview. More than 60 additions were made to the National Park system during the Udall years, including Canyonlands National Park in Utah, North Cascades National Park in Washington,

Redwood National Park in California and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail stretching from Georgia to Maine. The current Interior secretary, Ken Salazar, called Udall "one of the greatest secretaries of the Interior in my lifetime." He "was a pioneer and a visionary in protecting America's natural resources and cultural heritage who exemplified his family's commitment to public service," Salazar said. "Stewart Udall will be greatly missed." In a 1963 book, Udall warned of a "quiet conservation crisis" from pollution, overuse of natural resources and dwindling open spaces. He appealed for a new "land conscience" to preserve the environment. "If in our haste to 'progress,' the economics of ecology are disregarded by citizens and policy makers alike, the result will be an ugly America," Udall wrote. "We cannot afford an America where expedience tramples upon esthetics and development decisions are made with an eye only on the present." After leaving government service, Udall taught, practiced law and wrote books. In 1979, he left Washington to return home to Arizona. In doing so, Udall began another career — leading a legal battle against the government he had once served as an influential insider. Udall helped bring a lawsuit against the government on behalf of the families of Navajo men who suffered lung cancer in mining uranium for the government. Another lawsuit sought compensation for people who lived downwind from aboveground nuclear tests in Nevada during the 1950s and early 1960s. □

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# Thousands call for immigration reform in U.S.

SARAH KARUSH

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Frustrated with the lack of action to overhaul the country's immigration system, tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied on the National Mall and marched through the streets of the capital Sunday, waving American flags and holding homemade signs in English and Spanish.

Supporters traveled from around the country in hopes the rally would re-energize Congress to take up the volatile issue. Some lawmakers oppose any attempt to help an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants become U.S. citizens while others insist on stronger border controls first. President Barack Obama, who promised to make overhauling the immigration system a top priority in his first year, sought to reassure those at the rally with a video message presented on giant screens at the National Mall. The president said he was committed to working with Congress this year on a comprehensive bill to fix a "broken immigration system."

Obama said problems include families being torn apart, employers gaming the system and police officers struggling to keep communities safe.

The president, whose comments were released as he worked to get last-minute votes on a health care overhaul, said he would do everything in his power to forge a bipartisan consensus on immigration reform. The House was expected to vote on the landmark health care legislation late Sunday.

Some demonstrators were disappointed there hasn't been more action a year into Obama's term.

"I understand it may not all be his (Obama's) fault," said Manuel Bettran, a 21-year-old college student from Chicago. "I am frustrated. I really wish not just him, but everybody, would take it more seriously."

Bettran arrived in Washington on Sunday morning after a

13-hour bus ride. Like many, he had a personal connection to the issue. His parents were once illegal immigrants but were able to take advantage of an amnesty in the 1980s.

"Fortunately, they were able to become citizens during the last amnesty, but I know many people that weren't that lucky," said the American-born Bettran, adding that his brother was never able to gain legal status and had to leave the U.S.

Lawmakers failed to agree in 2006 and 2007 when they last tried to overhaul the immigration system, and the political climate is even tougher now.

Sens. Chuck Schumer and Lindsey Graham released an outline of a bill last week that calls for illegal immigrants

who want to get on the path to legal status to admit they broke the law by entering the U.S., pay fines and back taxes, and perform community service. They also would be required to pass background checks and be proficient in English before working toward legal residency, required before becoming a citizen.

Ben Jealous, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a speaker at the rally, said the activists no doubt got the attention of lawmakers by converging on the mall "on the one Sunday Congress was in session."

"I think you'll see a response in the following weeks," he said.

Authorities in D.C. don't provide crowd estimates, but



Demonstrator Adrian Corona of Columbia, S.C. shouts slogans during a rally for immigration reform on the National Mall in Washington, on Sunday, March 21, 2010.

Associated Press

the mall was full of people for three blocks.

People held signs with slogans such as, "You need us as much as we need you," and

"No Human Being is Illegal."

Many waved American flags, and a few also carried the banners of their countries of origin. □

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This photo provided by the White House taken Sunday, March 21, 2010, shows President Barack Obama talking on the phone with a member of Congress in the Chief of Staff's office at the White House. Aides, from left are, Phil Schiliro, Sean Sweeney, Rahm Emanuel, Jim Messina, and Dan Turton.

(Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

### HEALTH CARE BILL

*Continued from Front Page*

"Today is the day that is going to rank with the day we passed the civil rights bill in 1964,"

said Rep. John Dingell, a member of Congress since 1955. "Today we're doing something that ranks with what we did with Social Security

or Medicare. This is a day of which we can all be proud if we vote for that legislation."

The stakes could not have been higher for Obama's presidency. Obama has made health care reform the defining issue of his first year in office. Republicans hoped that by blocking the legislation, they would be able to thwart Obama's ambitious domestic agenda, including immigration reform and climate change legislation.

While national health care has long been a goal of presidents stretching back decades, it has proved elusive, in part because self-reliance and suspicion of a strong central government remain strong in the U.S.

A shouting band of protesters outside the Capitol dramatized their opposition, and one man stood up in the House visitor's gallery shouting, "Kill the bill" before he was ushered out — evidence of the passions the yearlong debate over health care has stirred.

Obama lobbied by phone from the White House, then took the crucial step of issuing an executive order that satisfied a small group of Democrats who demanded that no federal funds be used for elective abortions.

"We're well past 216" votes, a majority needed for passage, said Democratic Rep. Bart Stupak, swinging behind the bill after leading the anti-abortion holdouts in a rebellion that had left the outcome in doubt.

A spokesman for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops expressed skepticism that the presidential order would satisfy the church's objections.

Democratic aides confirmed Stupak's vote count.

Obama, on the verge of securing one of the most significant legislative triumphs in decades, planned to make a statement to the nation Sunday night after the House takes its final vote on the health care legislation.

After more than a year of political combat — certain to persist into the fall election campaign for control of Congress — debate on the House floor fell along predictable lines.

"The public has been grievously and purposely lied to," by Republicans in their efforts to defeat the legislation, said Democratic Rep. Louise Slaughter, a clear reference to Republican accusations that included the claim that there

would be death panels for elderly patients.

Republicans opposed the measure as a takeover of government health care that would cut Medicare for the elderly and raise taxes by nearly \$1 trillion combined. Republican Rep. David Dreier criticized the Democrats for their tactics on the House floor, but said, "the greatest outrage has always been for the bill itself."

Over and over, Democrats stressed the historic nature of the day. The measure represents the biggest expansion of the social safety net since Medicare and Medicaid were enacted in 1965 during President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration to provide government-funded health care coverage to the elderly and poor.

"Health care isn't only a civil right, it's a moral issue," said Democratic Rep. Patrick Kennedy. He said his late father, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, had worked his entire career for nationwide health care, and President John F. Kennedy before him. Slaughter, read a message President Franklin Roosevelt sent Congress in 1939 urging lawmakers to address the needs of those without health care, and said Democrat Harry Truman and Republican Richard Nixon had also sought to broaden health insurance coverage. Obama has said often that presidents of both parties have tried without success to achieve national health insurance, beginning with Theodore Roosevelt early in the 20th century.

The 44th president's quest to succeed where others have failed seemed at a dead end two months ago, when Republicans won a special election to fill Edward Kennedy's Massachusetts Senate seat, and with it, enough votes to prevent a final vote. □

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## Police: Boy, 16, made racial comment at Walmart

BRUCE SHIPKOWSKI,  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, New Jersey (AP) — A 16-year-old boy who police said made an announcement at Walmart ordering all black people in a southern New Jersey store to leave was charged with harassment and bias intimidation, authorities said Saturday.

The boy, whose name is not being released because he is a juvenile, grabbed one of the courtesy phones at Walmart's Washington Township store Sunday evening and calmly announced: "Attention, Walmart customers: All black people, leave the store now," police said.

The teen was arrested Friday and released to the custody of his parents; police did not know whether he had a lawyer.

"This was an extremely disturbing event on many levels," Gloucester County Prosecutor Sean Dalton said at a news conference. "Any statements like these that can cause harm or grave concern must be addressed as quickly we possibly can." Dalton said the case would be handled in juvenile court in neighboring Atlantic County, where the boy lives. He would not say whether the boy has a criminal record, citing the teen's age, and would not disclose the teen's race, saying that did not factor into the investigation.

The 16-year-old has been charged with harassment and bias intimidation.

Authorities would not say whether the announcement was planned or made impulsively. Police said they were also investigating a teenage boy who accompanied the suspect to the store, but the other boy has not been charged.

Officials for Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said the announcement was "unacceptable," and Dalton praised the company for its strong cooperation in the investigation.

"We're pleased this matter is resolved," Walmart spokesman David Tovar said in a statement issued after the news conference. "We have updated our intercom system at this store to prevent this from happening again. We again apologize to all of our customers and associates who had to listen to something so offensive."

Although a manager quickly went on the intercom system and apologized for the remark, many customers expressed their anger to store management. Some community members said Saturday that they've heard reports of similar incidents happening at the store in recent months that were not reported to police.

"We are concerned about that, and we're looking into these incidents. We want to work with the community to make sure these types of incidents don't happen," said Loretta Winters, president of the Gloucester County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Winters said she hopes the boy will get counseling and be educated about sensitivity so he can understand the consequences of his actions. □

Gloucester County, New Jersey prosecutor Sean Dalton, right, listens as Washington Township Police chief Rafael Muniz, left, answers a question Saturday, March 20, 2010, in Washington Township, N.J., as they announce police have arrested a 16-year-old Atlantic County boy on charges of harassment and bias intimidation in the case of a racial comment that was made over the public-address system at a Wal-Mart store in southern New Jersey.

Associated Press



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# Israel: No building restrictions in east Jerusalem



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, center, Cabinet Secretary Tzvi Hauser, right, and Israeli Minister for Minority Affairs, Avishay Braverman attend the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Sunday, March 21, 2010.

*Associated Press*

**MARK LAVIE**

**Associated Press Writer**

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Israel will not restrict construction in east Jerusalem, Israel's prime minister said Sunday hours before he left for Washington, despite a clear U.S. demand that building there must

stop and a crisis in relations between the two longtime allies.

Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with President Barack Obama Tuesday will be the first high-level meeting since the crisis erupted 10 days ago, when Israel embarrassed

visiting Vice President Joe Biden by announcing a plan for construction in a Jewish neighborhood in east Jerusalem, which is claimed by the Palestinians.

"As far as we are concerned, building in Jerusalem is like building in Tel Aviv" and there would be no restrictions, Netanyahu told his Cabinet.

This tough stance on Jerusalem has run into stiff opposition in Washington, but there were signs that Israel was working to ease the crisis. Cabinet ministers said that while there would be no formal freeze, construction in Jewish neighborhoods in east Jerusalem would be restricted, like Netanyahu's partial 10-month West Bank construction freeze. At stake are the first peace contacts between Israel and the Palestinian government in more than a year.

The Palestinians agreed to mediated talks, but the Jerusalem construction flap has given them second

thoughts. Israel said it prefers direct negotiations but would go along with the indirect format.

On Sunday, Netanyahu met with Obama's special Mideast envoy, George Mitchell, who is set to mediate. He delivered the White House invitation to the prime minister.

At the meeting with Netanyahu, Mitchell said, "Our shared goal ... is the resumption of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians in an environment that can result in an agreement that ends the conflict and resolves all permanent status issues."

U.S. officials have been dialing back the crisis rhetoric in recent days. The fact that a such a meeting was scheduled — even though the original purpose of Netanyahu's trip was not to meet Obama but to address a convention of AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby — is a likely indication that the U.S. and Israel are succeeding in ironing out their

differences.

The diplomatic package Netanyahu is offering the U.S. to ease the bilateral crisis has not been made public, but officials say one element is agreement to discuss all the outstanding issues with the Palestinians in indirect peace talks Mitchell is set to mediate. Those would include the future of Jerusalem, as well as borders, Jewish settlements and Palestinian refugees.

Netanyahu has always opposed compromise over Jerusalem. Israel captured the city's eastern sector from Jordan during the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it, a move not recognized by any other country. Over four decades, Israel has built a string of Jewish neighborhoods around the Arab section of the city. Most Israelis consider them part of the Jewish state, but Palestinians equate them to West Bank settlements, considered illegal under international law.

Previous rounds of unsuccessful peace talks have included a formula for Israel retaining the Jewish neighborhoods while Palestinians got sovereignty over the Arab sections, but Netanyahu pointedly took that off the table when he took office a year ago.

In Gaza Sunday, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Israel to end its blockade on Gaza, imposed after Palestinian militants captured an Israeli soldier in 2006 and tightened when the Islamic militant Hamas overran the territory the following year. Israel allows only basic humanitarian supplies into Gaza. □

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# Militant group in Kabul with draft peace deal

DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press Writer

KABUL (AP) — Thirteen Afghan civilians died in violence as the nation's hard-line vice president expressed hope for reconciliation and representatives of a militant group with ties to the Taliban brought a peace deal to the capital.

Talk of reconciling with insurgents has done little to slow fighting across Afghanistan, yet the issue is gaining steam, partly fueled by a "peace jirga" that Afghan President Hamid Karzai will host in late April or early May.

The Afghan government and others from the international community have had secret contacts with the Taliban or their representatives at the same time thousands of U.S.

and NATO reinforcements stream into the country to slow the insurgency.

Helmand province in southern Afghanistan was the scene of Sunday's deadliest violence. A suicide bomber killed 10 civilians and wounded seven others when he detonated his explosives near an Afghan army patrol at a bridge in Gereshk.

In eastern Afghanistan, two civilians died when a roadside bomb exploded near a crowd celebrating the Afghan new year in Khost province. And in Wardak province, NATO said an elderly man was shot and killed by a joint Afghan-international force that mistakenly believed he was a threat.

Also, NATO said two rockets landed Sunday around the military complex at Kabul

airport. A third landed nearby and a fourth hit in the eastern part of the capital.

There were no initial reports of casualties.

Besides working on ways to reconcile with the Taliban's top leaders, the Afghan government is finalizing a plan to use economic incentives to coax low- and mid-level insurgent fighters off the battlefield. Pakistan, Iran and other international players, meanwhile, have begun staking out positions on possible reconciliation negotiations that could mean an endgame to the 8-year-old war.

Harun Zarghun, chief spokesman for Hizb-i-Islami, said a five-member delegation was in Kabul to meet with government officials and also plans to meet Taliban leaders



In this photo taken on Saturday, March 20, 2010, Afghan Vice President Mohammad Qasim Fahim, right, shakes hand with officials after arriving at an airport for attending at the celebrations of the Afghan New Year shrine in Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh province north of Kabul, Afghanistan. Afghanistan's hard-line vice president expressed hope Sunday that an upcoming national conference will lay the foundation for peace with insurgents as a dozen civilians died in separate bombings in front-line provinces.

Associated Press

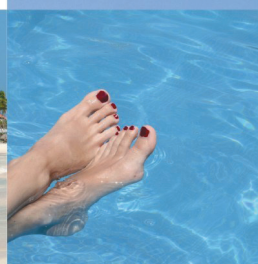
somewhere in Afghanistan. The group, which has longtime ties to al-Qaida, was founded by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and rebel commander in the war against the Soviets in the 1980s.

Spokesmen for the Karzai government could not be

reached for comment.

Khalid Farooqi, a member of the parliament from Paktika province, said one delegation from Hizb-i-Islami arrived 10 days ago, and a second one, including Qutbuddin Halal, a powerful figure in the group, came on Saturday.

Continued on Next Page



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An Afghan police stands near a portion of a vehicle left following a roadside bomb explosion during a ceremony marking the New Year in Khost, south of Kabul, Afghanistan on Sunday, March 21, 2010. Two other civilians died and four were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near a crowd of people celebrating the Afghan New Year at a mountaintop shrine in eastern Afghanistan, a police commander said.

#### PEACE DEAL

*Continued from Previous Page*

Zarghun, the group's spokesman in Pakistan, said

the delegation is carrying a 15-point plan that calls for foreign forces to start pulling out in July — a full year ahead of President

Barack Obama's desire to start withdrawing U.S. forces in July 2011.

The plan also calls for the Afghan parliament to serve

*Associated Press*

through December. After that, parliament would be replaced by an interim government, or shura, which would hold local and national elections within a year, according to the plan. Zarghun said a new Afghan constitution would be written, merging the current version with ones used earlier.

AspokesmanforHekmatyar, Wali Ullah, said Hizb-i-Islami has never refused to join in peace talks, under certain conditions. "The main condition is the empowerment of President Karzai to engage in talks and make decisions," he said.

"The aggressive occupying forces should also announce a schedule for leaving Afghanistan."

Earlier this month, Hizb-i-Islami fighters battled the Taliban with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns in

Baghlan province. It was not immediately clear whether the clashes were a localized militant dispute or represented signs of a rift between Hekmatyar and the Taliban.

But dozens of Hizb-i-Islami fighters, under pressure from the Taliban, ended up joining government forces that had amassed on the edge of the battle zone.

In the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif to mark the Afghan new year, hard-line Vice President Mohammad Qasim Fahim expressed hope that the upcoming peace jirga will lay a foundation for peace with insurgents.

"The government will try to find a peaceful life for those Afghans who are unhappy," Fahim, who fought the Soviets and commanded forces that overthrew the Taliban in 2001, told thousands who flocked to a shrine. □

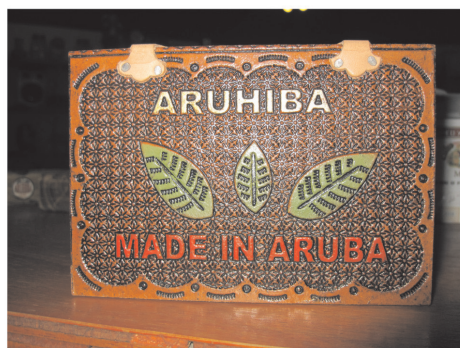
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# UN: 3 killed in quake collapse in northern Haiti

JONATHAN M. KATZ

Associated Press Writer

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — A small earthquake struck northern Haiti early Sunday, collapsing an apartment building and killing at least three people, a U.N. spokesman said.

Residents said the tremor struck Haiti's second-largest city of Cap-Haitien shortly after midnight, collapsing the four-story building. Some nearby structures were damaged by the collapse but no other quake effects were reported.

Three survivors were pulled out of the rubble and taken to a hospital, U.N. spokesman Loucius Eugene said.

Haitian police, civil protection authorities and U.N. peacekeepers from Chile and Nepal found the body of another person killed inside.

Cap-Haitien lies along the

fault line that produced three moderate earthquakes in nearby Cuba on Saturday. It was not affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, some 80 miles to the south.

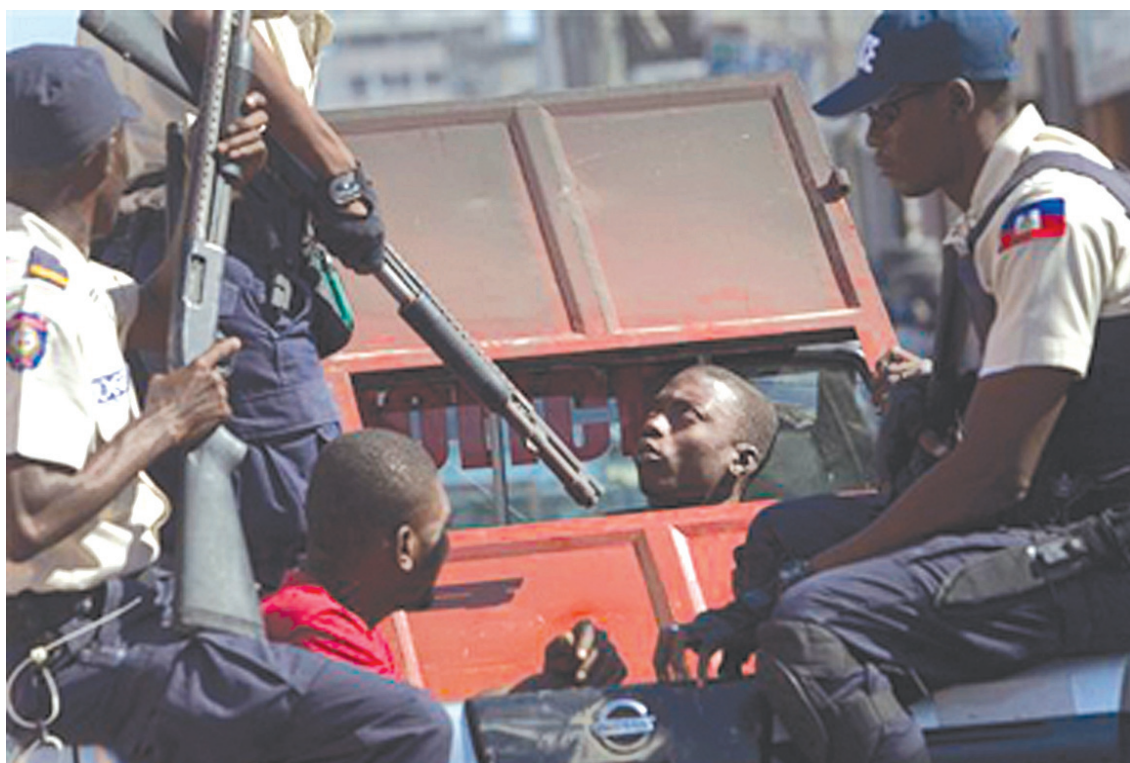
Witnesses said it had been raining, which could have weakened the ground under the structure.

U.S. Geological Survey scientists were studying data Sunday for signs of the temblor but had no confirmation of the earthquake. A small, 3.7-magnitude aftershock was felt in Port-au-Prince late Saturday night.

"We don't really see anything that is jumping out of the records but ... we're looking at this," geophysicist Rafael Abreu said.

But residents of the northern port city said they were frightened by the shaking.

Last month three children were killed in Cap-Haitien



Earthquake survivors who were scavenging amid rubble of a damaged building are detained by police in Port-au-Prince, Sunday, March 21, 2010. A 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Haiti on Jan. 12, killing and injuring thousands and leaving more than a million people living in makeshift camps.

*Associated Press*

when a school collapsed after a late-night tremor and heavy rains.

There have been several

panics in Cap-Haitien since the Port-au-Prince disaster, including two triggered by evangelical churches that

convinced thousands that earthquakes and tsunamis were coming on dates that have since passed. □



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# 'Alice' still reigns at box office with \$34.5M



Director Tim Burton poses for photographers as he arrives for the Royal World Premiere of "Alice In Wonderland" at Leicester Square in London in this February 25, 2010 file photo.

By DAVID GERMAIN,  
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — Alice remains the queen of the box office.

Johnny Depp and Tim Burton's "Alice in Wonderland" took in \$34.5 million to remain the No. 1 movie for a third-straight weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The Disney release raised its domestic haul to \$265.8 million and its worldwide total to \$565.8 million after just three weekends in theaters, a huge result for a film playing in the typically slow month of March.

"You rarely see this kind of domination by one movie at this time of year," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com. "Normally at this time of year, films don't make this kind of money, and they don't hold in this long."

"Alice in Wonderland" easily beat a rush of new movies led by 20th Century Fox's family film "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," which opened at No. 2 with \$21.8 million. The movie is adapted from Jeff Kinney's cartoon novel about a sixth grader maneuvering through the intricate social structure at his middle school, which includes its own "cooties" game known as the "cheese touch."

"I think cheese touch equals magic touch at the box office," said Chris Aronson, head of distribution at 20th Century Fox.

Debating at No. 3 was Jennifer Aniston and Gerard Butler's action comedy "The Bounty Hunter" with \$21

million. Released by Sony, the movie follows a bounty hunter chasing his ex-wife, a reporter with an arrest warrant over her head after she misses a court date while pursuing a story.

"We had figured an estimate in the high teens, so 20-plus million is a good number for us," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony.

Jude Law and Forest Whitaker's action thriller "Repo Men" flopped with a No. 4 opening of \$6.2 million. The Universal release features Law as a repo man on the run in a future where organs are bloodily repossessed if patients miss their payments. In narrower release, Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning's Joan Jett music drama "The Runaways" opened weakly with \$803,629 in 244 theaters, averaging \$3,294 a cinema.

That compared to an average of \$9,229 in 3,739 theaters for "Alice in Wonderland," \$7,085 in 3,077 theaters for "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," \$6,831 in 3,074 cinemas for "The Bounty Hunter" and \$2,440 in 2,521 locations for "Repo Men."

Released by Apparition, "The Runaways" stars Stewart as Jett and Fanning as singer Cherie Currie as they opened doors for women rockers in the 1970s with an all-girl band.

Ben Stiller's comic drama "Greenberg" premiered strongly in limited release, pulling in \$120,432 in three theaters for a huge average of \$40,144 a cinema.

Released by Focus Features, "Greenberg" stars Stiller as a neurotic whose mean tongue jeopardizes a budding romance

with his brother's personal assistant (Greta Gerwig).

James Cameron's science-fiction blockbuster "Avatar" remained in the top 10 three months into its run. The 20th Century Fox release pulled in \$4 million to raise its domestic total to \$736.9 million. Worldwide, "Avatar" has taken in \$2.67 billion.

"Alice in Wonderland" continued to lift overall Hollywood revenues, which came in at \$130 million for the weekend, up 23 percent from the same weekend last year,

when the thriller "Knowing" debuted at No. 1 with \$24.6 million.

So far this year, domestic revenues are at \$2.43 billion, up 10.3 percent over 2009's, according to Hollywood.com. Factoring in higher ticket prices, movie attendance is 8.2 percent ahead of last year's. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "Alice in Wonderland,"

\$34.5 million.

2. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," \$21.8 million.

3. "The Bounty Hunter," \$21 million.

4. "Repo Men," \$6.2 million.

5. "She's Out of My League," \$6 million.

6. "Green Zone," \$5.96 million.

7. "Shutter Island," \$4.8 million.

8. "Avatar," \$4 million.

9. "Our Family Wedding," \$3.8 million.

10. "Remember Me," \$3.3 million. □

## 'Butterfly' back, and so is New York City Opera

By RONALD BLUM,  
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Having disappeared from Lincoln Center for a season, New York City Opera is taking tiny steps toward recovery.

Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" returned Friday night in a revival of the pretty minimalist production by Mark Lamos that was first seen in November 1998. Joined by revivals of Chabrier's "L'Etoile," which opened Thursday, and Handel's "Partenope," which begins April 3, it completes the company's modest five-opera comeback season.

Next season will be just as limited, with another quintet of stagings.

That's down from 13 productions, including six new ones, during the 2007-08 season. Bouncing back from the closing of its home for reconstruction and the hiring and abrupt departure of Gerard Mortier before he began his scheduled term as general manager will take a long time.

Lamos' "Butterfly" has proven to be popular. With large sliding shoji screens at the front and rear of the stage, eight steps that stretch across the set and pretty colors of sky blue, sunset red, aqua and pink, Michael Yeargan's sets

and Robert Wierzel's lighting create an abstract hilltop house for Cio-Cio-San above Nagasaki harbor, one that allows breezy movement.

Reprising a role she sang when this production was telecast two years ago, soprano Shu-Ying Li was endearing as the 15-year-old geisha, although her voice had a steely edge to it.

Tenor Steven Harrison's voice came in and out of focus as Lt. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, depending on where he was on the set and which direction his head was turned, and there was a phlegmy quality to it when pushed.

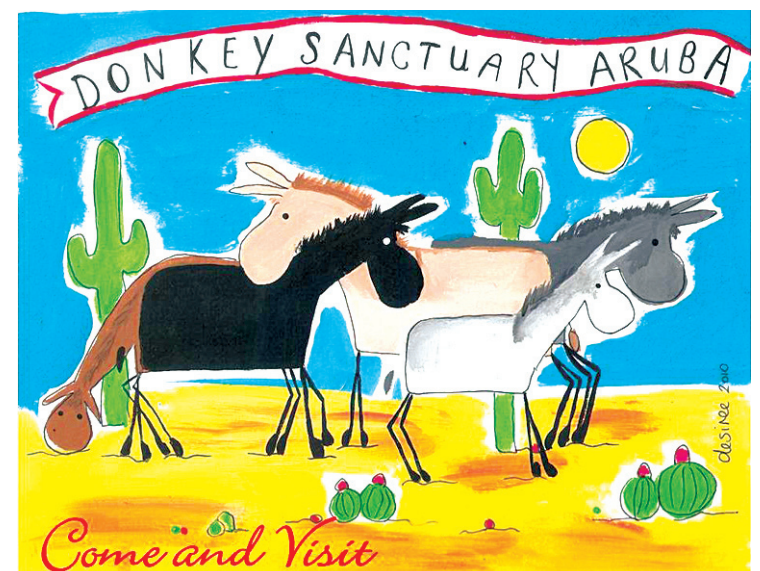
Baritone Quinn Kelsey, making his company debut, did the best singing of the evening as Sharpless, the U.S. counsel, who tries to caution the officer against his

callous behavior. He was the moral and vocal center of the performance.

Mezzo-soprano Nina Yoshida Nelsen, also making her debut, spent the night slightly hunched over as Suzuki, conveying her heartbreak with her voice. Eddie Schweighardt had a winning smile and energetic boyish charm as Sorrow, the young child of Cio-Cio-San and Pinkerton.

David Grabarkewitz, the stage director, blocked effectively throughout, culminating in a shattering final scene with Cio-Cio-San and Sorrow. Conductor Steven Mosteller settled down after some early coordination problems with the brass.

There are nine more performances through April 18. □







# Toyota shareholders sue over fallen stock price

By CURT ANDERSON,  
AP Legal Affairs Writer

MIAMI — Toyota shareholders incensed over a sudden drop in the Japanese automaker's stock price are heading to court with lawsuits claiming company executives deliberately misled investors and the public about the depth of accelerator problems in millions of its vehicles.

At least three proposed class-action lawsuits filed by Toyota investors say the company gave false initial assurances that the sudden acceleration problem was a simple matter of floor mats trapping gas pedals, helping prop up the stock price.

The shareholder cases are part of an avalanche of potentially costly lawsuits against Toyota Motor Corp. over the acceleration issue, including those filed by crash victims and their families and those brought by Toyota owners contending their vehicles are worth far less because of the recalls.

The investor lawsuits say Toyota spread misleading information through press releases, conference calls with stock analysts and TV interviews to assure stockholders and the public that the accelerator problem was easily fixed or might be the driver's fault.

Instead, the lawsuits contend, top Toyota executives have known for nearly a decade that faulty electronic throttle controls caused vehicles to sometimes careen wildly out of control but covered it up to protect the company's reputation for safety — and its stock price. The company has not issued any recalls involving flaws in the electronic throttles and has repeatedly denied they

are the problem.

U.S.-listed shares rose from just over \$75 on Oct. 5, the day of the floor mat recall, to above \$90 on Jan. 21, when Toyota announced another recall — over gas pedals it says can stick in certain conditions.

After that, the stock price fell, dropping 16 percent as of early March. Shares have since rebounded somewhat, closing Thursday on the New York Stock Exchange at \$79.34, but some investors say the recovery did not prevent them from losing potentially millions of dollars as the stock was dropping.

Since the sticky pedal recall in late January, Toyota's total U.S. market capitalization has fallen 13 percent to \$135.87 billion. In trading on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, Toyota shares also have lost nearly 17 percent of their value since Jan. 21. That's wiped out about 2.27 trillion yen (\$25.1 billion) of the company's market capitalization there.

Toyota declined comment because the cases are pending in court. The company has repeatedly denied its electronic throttle controls are to blame for sudden acceleration.

In the lawsuits, the shareholders are asking a judge to certify a "class" of plaintiffs that would represent all Toyota shareholders in the U.S. who held company stock on specific dates. If Toyota is found liable, damages could easily run into the hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars.

The shareholder lawsuits are pending in federal court in California, the location of Toyota's North American headquarters.

In one of the lawsuits, Toyota stockholder Harry Stackhouse

of Richboro, Pa., contends the company "misled investors by failing to disclose that there was a major design defect in Toyota's acceleration system, which could cause unintended acceleration."

"This drop removed the inflation from Toyota's securities prices, causing real economic loss to investors who had purchased securities," said Stackhouse, who said he bought 40 shares in late 2009 just as the accelerator problems became more widely known.

Stackhouse and the others filing suit — shareholders from Ohio and Tennessee — did not return several telephone calls seeking comment. All three investors filed sworn statements that they did not buy the shares as an excuse to sue the company.

To win damages, the investors must be able to prove Toyota made misleading statements about an issue that would have a "material" effect on its bottom line, said James Cox, a Duke University law professor who specializes in corporate and securities law. And they must show Toyota had a duty to disclose the truthful information.

"They clearly win on the materiality issue. This is going to be a matter that hits Toyota square in the eye," Cox said. "But the mere fact that you didn't disclose it isn't necessarily fault. It's whether you have a duty."

John Coffee, a law professor at Columbia University, said there has to be strong evidence of fraud.

"Stupidity or gross negligence is not enough, and a defense by Toyota that they were surprised about the extent of the problem can be anticipated," Coffee said. □

# IMF warns wealthiest nations about their debt

BEIJING — The International Monetary Fund warned the world's wealthiest nations Sunday to watch their surging levels of government debt, saying it could drag down the growth needed to ensure continued economic recovery.

The economic crisis is leaving "deep scars in fiscal balances, particularly in the advanced economies," John Lipsky, the IMF's No. 2 official, told the China Development Forum in Beijing. He said that countries that have been going into debt to stimulate their economies should now prepare for belt-tightening steps next year.

"Policymakers should be making it clear to their citizens why a return to prudent policies is a necessary condition for sustained economic health," said Lipsky, who is the fund's deputy managing director, according to remarks prepared for the conference.

The IMF projects that gross general government debt in the G-7 advanced economies, except Germany and Canada, will rise from an average of about 75 percent of GDP at the end of 2007 to about 110 percent of GDP at end of 2014, Lipsky said.

This year, the average debt-to-GDP ratio in the wealthiest countries is projected to reach levels that prevailed in 1950 in the aftermath of World War II, Lipsky said. The ballooning of government debt also comes amid rising health and pension spending, he said.

"Addressing this fiscal challenge is a key near-term priority, as concerns about fiscal sustainability could undermine confidence in the economic recovery," Lipsky said, adding that in the medium term, large public debt could lead to higher interest rates and slower growth.

Countries should aggressively pursue reforms that will boost growth, such as the liberalization of goods and labor markets and the elimination of tax distortions, he said, though such moves on their own will be insufficient without direct measures to reduce spending.

They should also strengthen fiscal institutions in ways that could include improving tax collection and reinforcing fiscal responsibility legislation, while pursuing entitlement reforms, such as increasing the retirement age, to help in restoring finances, he said.

For the United States, Lipsky said a higher public savings rate will be required to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.

"An increase in public saving would augment an expected rise in household saving to boost national saving and reduce the current account deficit," he said.

America's national debt — now \$12.5 trillion — has been growing by leaps and bounds over the past decade, to the point where it threatens to swamp overall economic output. Roughly half of it is owned by global investors, with China holding the largest stake.

Japan's debt is proportionately even bigger — about twice its GDP — but the impact is cushioned by the fact that most is held by Japanese households.

In Europe and Japan, where there is already a high tax burden on labor, Lipsky said measures should focus on improving the targeting of social benefits and on reducing exemptions on indirect taxes. □





# Furyk takes control in Tampa

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

PALM HARBOR, Florida (AP) — Jim Furyk was one round away from ending the longest drought of his career after shooting a bogey-free 4-under 67 Saturday to build a three-shot lead at the Transitions Championship.

“I’m in a great position in the tournament,” said Furyk, who is trying to win for the first time since the 2007 Canadian Open.

“I’ve got a three-shot lead. You kind of dictate what the other guys have to do.”

Furyk was at 11-under 202, with a strong group of contenders behind him.

Defending champion Retief Goosen birdied the last hole of a roller-coaster round that gave him a 1-under 70, part of four-way tie for second. The others at 8-under 205 were two past champions at Innisbrook



Jim Furyk holds up his trophy after winning the Transitions Championship golf tournament Sunday, March 21, 2010, at Innisbrook in Palm Harbor, Fla. Furyk closed with a 2-under 69 on Sunday for a one-shot victory over K.J. Choi.

Associated Press

— K.J. Choi (67) and Carl Pettersson (70) — and Bubba Watson, who has never won on tour. He scrambled for a 70.

Padraig Harrington, a three-time major champion who hasn’t won since the 2008 PGA Championship, went 14 holes without a birdie to fall out of the lead, then dropped another shot on the 18th hole for a 72 that left him four shots behind.

Furyk is 0 for 58 on the PGA Tour since his last victory. This is his first 54-hole lead since the Colonial nearly three years ago, when he lost in a playoff to Rory Sabbatini.

There have been times when he let tournaments get away down the stretch, and times when he was beaten, such as the Memorial last year when he was three shots better than everyone in the field except one guy — Tiger Woods —

who won by a shot.

Sunday might be his best chance.

The few times when Furyk made a mistake, such as missing the green on the par-3 fourth, he made up for it with his putting. Later in the warm afternoon, when he was giving himself so many birdie chances, he had to settle for par.

The turning point came early on the back nine.

Four players had at least a share of the lead at some point, and eight players were within range until Furyk hit a 3-wood just left of the green on the par-5 11th and chipped to 4 feet for birdie. On the next hole, he hit 7-iron to some 35 feet behind the flag, and poured in a long, slippery put that broke sharply to the cup.

Suddenly, he was three shots clear and his prospects were looking up.

Not so for Pettersson, who closed out the front nine with consecutive bogeys, or Steve Stricker, who was tied for the lead until hitting his tee shot in the water on the par-3 13th and scrambling for bogey. Stricker dropped another shot on a par 3 coming in for a 71, and wound up five shots behind.

Choi is a two-time winner in Tampa and feels as comfortable on the Copperhead course as any.

“I look at the tops of the trees to see the wind,” Choi said. “You have to know, and it can get frustrating. You can lose it out here. This course will do that. That’s why you see so many players who have won here before, because they know that.”

Goosen also is a two-time winner, and while he didn’t like up the course, playing bogey-free on the back nine didn’t hurt. □

## NHL Roundup

# Satan, Wideman score as Bruins beat Rangers 2-1

BOSTON (AP) — Miroslav Satan and Dennis Wideman scored and Tuukka Rask made 23 saves to help the Boston Bruins beat the New York Rangers 2-1 on Sunday.

Boston, eighth in the Eastern Conference on 76 points with 11 games left, opened a three-point lead over ninth-place Atlanta and a five-point advantage over the Rangers. Michael Del Zotto scored for the Rangers.

## Panthers 5, Lightning 2

At Sunrise, Florida, Nathan Horton, David Booth and Cory Stillman scored in the first period as Florida ended a three-game losing streak.

Stephen Weiss and Radek Dvorak added third-period goals, and Scott Clemmensen made 29 saves for the Panthers. Steven Stamkos and Steve Downie scored for Tampa Bay. The Lightning have lost five straight and have won just two of their last 14.

## Wild 4, Flames 3

At St. Paul, Chuck Kobasew scored twice and Minnesota won



Boston Bruins right wing Miroslav Satan, of Slovakia, beats Toronto Maple Leafs goalie Jean-Sebastien Giguere to score the only goal during the shootout of an NHL hockey game in Boston, Thursday, March 4, 2010. The Bruins beat the Maple Leafs 3-2.

Associated Press

its third straight home game, beating Calgary for the fifth time in six games.

Josh Harding made 29 saves, and Andrew Brunette and Guillaume Latendresse also scored for Minnesota, seven points behind eighth-place Detroit in the Western Conference. Steve Staios, Ian White and Eric Nystrom scored for Calgary, two points behind Detroit.

## Sabres 5, Hurricanes 3

At Raleigh, Jochen Hecht scored twice and Ryan Miller made 27 saves as Buffalo won its third straight match.

Sergei Samsonov, Brandon Sutter and Eric Staal scored for Carolina. □



## MOTORSPORTS

# Jimmie Johnson wins for first time at Bristol

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

BRISTOL, Tennessee (AP) — Jimmie Johnson sent yet another message to his competitors Sunday, winning at a track that has always vexed the four-time defending NASCAR champion.

Johnson plowed his way through the field in three laps to grab his first career victory at Bristol Motor Speedway, where he denied Kurt Busch a chance to gain more ground on the No. 48 championship team.

Busch led 278 of the 500 laps and had a decent gap on Johnson when his easy drive to victory was clouded by a debris caution with 17 laps remaining.

All the leaders headed to pit road, and Busch and Johnson both took four tires on the final stop.

Greg Biffle, Matt Kenseth, Carl Edwards and Tony Stewart all took two tires, giving them the first four positions on the restart. Busch was fifth, Johnson was sixth and the race resumed with 10 laps to go.

Kenseth's difficulty getting up to speed stacked up traffic behind him, including Busch, who lost his opportunity to leapfrog his way to the front. Not Johnson, though. He weaved through the mess up to second, Stewart moved into the lead, and Johnson needed just over one lap to pick him off, too.

"When we're winning at tracks that we're not supposed to, boys better look out," Johnson warned. "Even that 2 car (Busch) that doesn't want the 48 to win."

Busch, a five-time Bristol winner who hasn't been to Victory Lane at the bullring since 2006, was irate over his radio at the loss.

He settled for third behind Johnson and Stewart, missing his chance to win his second consecutive win of the season and prove his Penske Racing

team has made enough gains to run consistently with Johnson and the Hendrick Motorsports bunch.

"I'd rather lose to any of the other 41 cars out there than the 48 car," Busch said. □

Jimmie Johnson tosses a loaf of bread in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series' Food City 500 auto race at Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tenn., Sunday, March 21, 2010. ASSOP



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Jelena Jankovic of Serbia poses with her trophy after defeating Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark in their finals match at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament, Sunday, March 21, 2010, in Indian Wells, Calif.

*Associated Press*

## Ljubicic beats Roddick to win Indian Wells title

**BETH HARRIS**

**AP Sports Writer**

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia outlasted Andy Roddick 7-6 (3), 7-6 (5) to win the BNP Paribas Open.

Ljubicic won on his fourth match point Sunday, blasting a big serve that Roddick couldn't return. At 31, Ljubicic is the second-oldest

winner at Indian Wells behind Jimmy Connors, who was five months older when he won in 1984.

Roddick was trying to become the first American man to win since 2001, but he trailed in both tiebreakers. He had beaten Ljubicic seven times in 10 meetings, winning their last meeting at Indian Wells in two tiebreakers in 2007.

Jelena Jankovic defeated Caroline Wozniacki 6-2, 6-4 earlier Sunday to win the women's title, the Serbian's first in seven months.

The former top-ranked player from Serbia dictated from the baseline throughout the 1½-hour match, hitting the lines and keeping Wozniacki on the run.

Jankovic broke Wozniacki three times in the first set and again in the first game of the second set.

"I wanted to be really aggressive, but at the same time patient, and not really go for too much or go over the limit with some balls," Jankovic said. "I waited for my opportunities, and when I had them, I took them."

Wozniacki brought her coach, who is her father, on court once in each set, but it didn't help. She never found a solution to Jankovic's pinpoint power.

"I tried to change it when I saw it was not going my way,

but I just made a few too many errors at the important points," Wozniacki said.

She held to trail 5-4 in the second set, prompting Jankovic to summon her coach. Jankovic then served out the match, setting up match point with a backhand down the line. Wozniacki's forehand return sailed long on the final point.

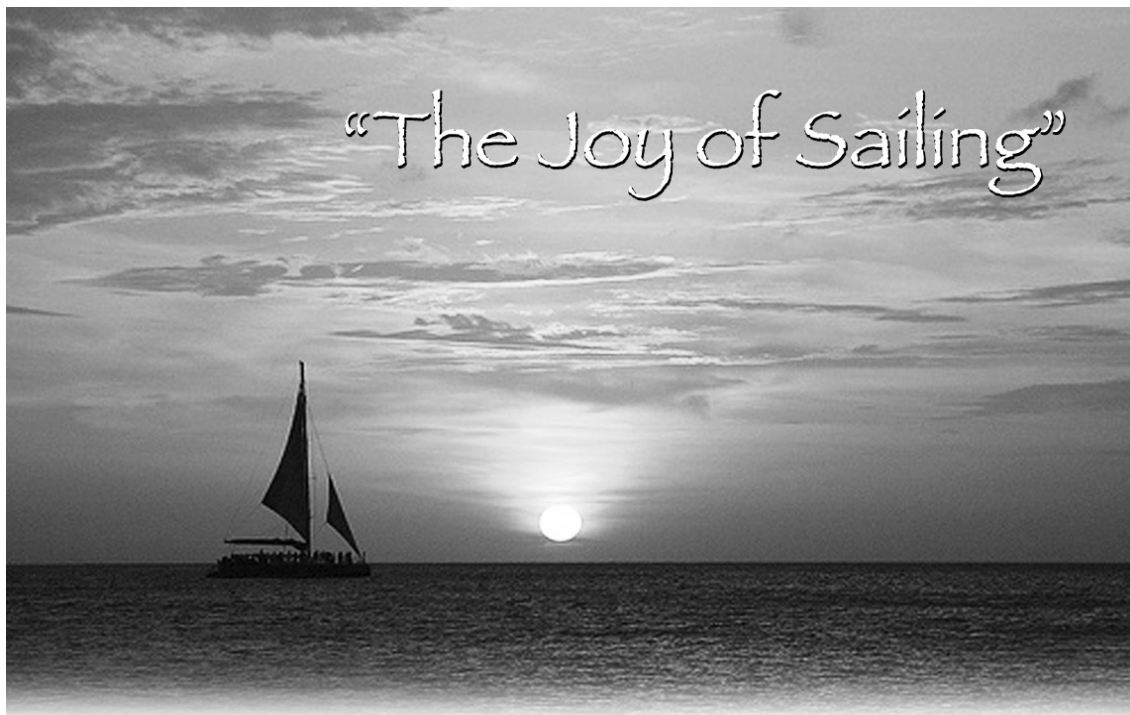
"I was making a few too many errors and I didn't have too many first serves in," said Wozniacki, who won 19 of 30 first-serve points. "Normally, the other matches I set the points up with my service well.

That didn't happen today. Then I was on the back foot and she was deciding."

Jankovic kissed her racket and later did the same to the crystal trophy, which was so heavy she couldn't lift it in triumph.

"I haven't been working out in the gym lately," she said. "Caroline could have done a better job. She should have helped."

Two years removed from being the world's No. 1 player, Jankovic is projected to rise to No. 8 when the WTA Tour rankings are released Monday. She hadn't won a title since August at Cincinnati; Indian Wells is her 12th career title. □



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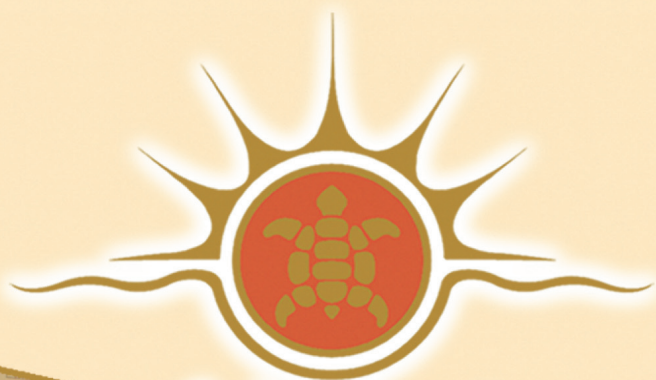
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## Tiger Woods: 'A little nervous' about return at the Masters

**JIM LITKE**  
AP Sports Writer

Tiger Woods acknowledged "living a lie," saying he alone was responsible for the sex scandal that caused his downfall and that no one in his inner circle was aware of his misdeeds.

"It was all me. I'm the one who did it. I'm the one who acted the way I acted. No one knew what was going on when it was going on," Woods told The Golf Channel in one of two interviews Sunday night. A second one was aired on ESPN.

"I'm sure if more people would have known in my inner circle, they would have stopped it or tried to put a stop to it. But I kept it all to myself," he said.

Answering questions on camera for the first time since his early morning car crash last November, Woods again provided few details about the crash, his marriage, his stint in a rehabilitation clinic or much of his private life.

"A lot has transpired in my life. A lot of ugly things have happened. ... I've done some pretty bad things in my life," he told ESPN.

Woods also acknowledged more fully than in any of his previous statements that the public ridicule had caused him shame.

"It was hurtful, but then again, you know what?

I did it," he told The Golf Channel. "And I'm the one who did those things. And looking back on it now, with a more clear head, I get it. I can understand why people would say those things. Because you know what? It was disgusting behavior. It's hard to believe that was me, looking back on it now."

Woods was more comfortable and composed than during his only previous public outing, dressed in golf clothes. He said he couldn't wait to get back to playing golf, though he had reservations about how he'll be received when he returns to golf next month at the Masters.

"I'm a little nervous about that to be honest with you," he told ESPN. "It would be nice to hear a couple claps here and there."

Woods plans to end more than four months of seclusion and play at Augusta National, one of the most tightly controlled environments in golf. □



In this photo from video, Tiger Woods responds to questions during an interview with Golf Channel broadcaster Kelly Tilghman that aired on the Golf Channel on Sunday, March 21, 2010, at Isleworth Country Club in Windermere, Fla. Woods answered questions on camera for the first time since his early morning car crash last November and the sex scandal that cost him sponsors and fans.

*Associated Press*

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## Antillean PM defends the initiative of a media law

*Freedom of expression does not give anyone the freedom to insult*



Netherlands Antilles Prime Minister Emily de Jongh Elhage

ORANJESTAD — Netherlands Antilles Prime Minister Emily de Jongh Elhage is a strong believer in freedom of the press, but feels it is the duty of the government to guarantee right to privacy of its citizens.

Mrs. De Jongh Elhage presented her arguments during the opening ceremonies of the Inter American Press Association Mid Year meeting that concludes today here in Aruba. More than 200 representatives from various newspapers from the American continent are represented here to discuss among others, freedom of the press. The opening ceremony included the presence of His Excellency Governor Fredis Refunjol.

Aruba Prime Minister Mike Eman opened the ceremony stating that freedom of the press contributes to a free society. The Aruban leader's statement was short as he was en route to Holland just an hour later for the Aruba celebrations there.

Mr. Eman said freedom of



Aruba Prime Minister Mike Eman

expression is crucial for a society to reach its maximum potential. But, imperative in that development is the sense of what he describes as "communitarism". "We need to create pillar to support our society that are based on families, neighborhoods, schools, Churches and efforts of the media to stand for the principles of a community." He told how his family was helped by a community of

neighbors when his father passed away, leaving behind a widow with eight young children and nothing else to support the family. But people then made sure they were not left desolate. "We were blessed with teachers who would call the house when one of us would miss school; we were blessed with the fundamentals that support a strong community."

*Continued on Next Page*





# Antillean PM defends the initiative of a media law



Continued from Page B1

Prime Minister Eman recognized the right of everyone to fulfill the ambition for material richness, however said it is important to understand the value of finding the right balance, taking service toward others in the community in consideration. He also emphasized the value of feeling gratitude for all the blessings received, as many achievements have to be attributed to efforts of those who came before us as well, such as it the case with freedom of the press.

His Antillean colleague, Emily de Jongh Elhage chose to illustrate the field of tension that exists between freedom of the press and the right to privacy. The Antillean Prime Minister said that she had personal experiences how her family was under attack during political campaign, on matters that had nothing to do with her own political views.

The government, in her opinion, has the responsibility to reconcile the seemingly opposing thoughts on freedom of expression and right to privacy. She emphasized the importance of the right of people to have a freedom of

expression and that the media has a particular task to educate and inform the community on these rights as well. "The media has an important role to play in demanding accountability and transparency from the leadership of a community. But at the same time we have a right to demand an ethical, professional and objective press." According to Mrs. de Jongh Elhage, ethics come to play when dealing with privacy rights of individuals, also protected by international treaties. But even so, many media outlets do condemn a person even before he or she has been judged in a court of law. De Jongh Elhage pleaded for balance and quoted Her Majesty Queen Beatrix, who in 2006 stated that "the right to insult does not exist."

A community that respects itself does not recognize the right to insult."

The Prime Minister said sometimes the press has to walk a tight role, and here is where the role of the Government kicks in. There are no absolute freedoms and there are always limitations to be observed. She urged not to misunderstand her, as she

believes the Government has to protect freedom of expression and stay away from censure. However, the Government has the ethical obligation to protect the privacy of its citizens.

The way to reconcile these two concepts can only happen through a code of ethics for all media, opening up a constant line of dialogue between the media and the government, civil society. Moreover, the public needs to know what are the sanctions when the ethic codes are broken.

The Antillean Prime Minister illustrated that in her own country, Curaçao with a population of just 160,000 people, there are 32 radio stations, 12 news papers and four television stations. Some of the radio stations have daily talk shows with live call-ins. No one seems to take responsibility for the insults that many of these call-ins throw across the radio waves. "Our government believes it is important to maintain a high standard for the media and it is important to do so through a media law." She argued that that most of the media in the Netherlands Antilles do support the idea of such a law that is in its final stages of design.

Prime Minister de Jongh Elhage rejects the notion that this law would be an instrument of censure, as freedom of expression is a fundamental law described in the constitution. But, at the same time, that freedom cannot be unlimited in such a way that it gives people the right to insult, thus infringing on the other fundamental right, namely that of privacy. □



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# The Aruban community enjoyed Aruba Day at the Aruba Numismatic Museum



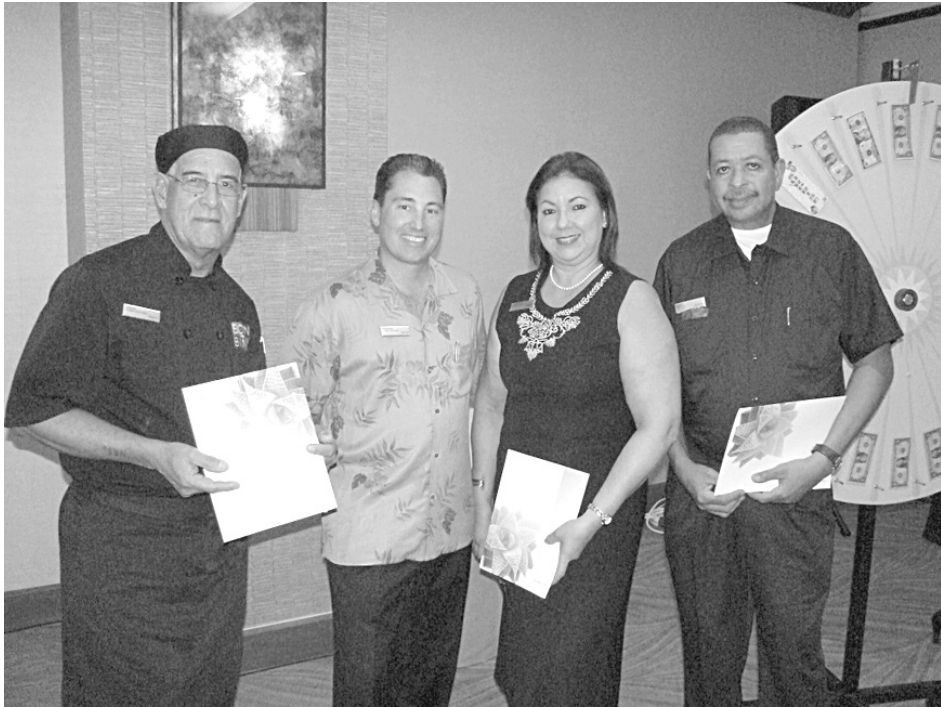
ORANJESTAD – A huge public attend the celebration of the Aruban Day at the Aruban Numismatic Museum. As you can see by the pictures, the public enjoyed the special attractions and what the

museum had to offer. Congratulations to the Aruba Numismatic Museum for this great event, bringing the Aruban culture closer to the public. □





# Brand Champions for February at the Westin



**PALM BEACH** – A number of exceptional associates were lauded at the Westin Aruba Resort as brand champions, for the month of February 201.

Among those nominated for the Front of the House, Waleska Curvelo, Julissa Geerman & George Michel from the Front Office, Rachelle Kock of Activities, Margarita Exposito, Beverages, Rose Etienne & Robert Tromp,

from Food & Beverage, Jackie Samuel, of Service Express, and Rufino Ras, Errol Nicolaas & Domingo Geerman of Banquet Services. For the Heart of the House those nominated included Edgardo Hernandez & Julio de la Cruz of Banquet Services, Eugene Valentijn, Almeida Cantillo, June Lake, Julia Belen, Marie Carmen Nunez & Lidnery Vrolijk of the Housekeeping Department.

Among all those who excelled Rose Etienne was the winner for the Front of the House, while Edgardo Hernandez outshone all other for the Heart of the House, they were both named Brand Champions of the Month for their willingness to cooperate, the way they handle their guests and their colleagues, and how they go the extra mile during periods of high occupancy.

Service Legends of the Month, associates with long term careers were also recognized, among them Marina Vasquez, Housekeeping with fifteen years of service, Carmela Carlet, Front Office, with ten years of service, Nicomedes Caraballo, Kitchen, with twenty years of service, Mauvalyn Hutchinson, Bon Bini Café with five years of service and Lourdes Tromp, Purchasing, and Ricardo Toppenberg Engineering, both concluding thirty years of service at the resort.

Pictured here General Manager Richard Roy with his top performers. □



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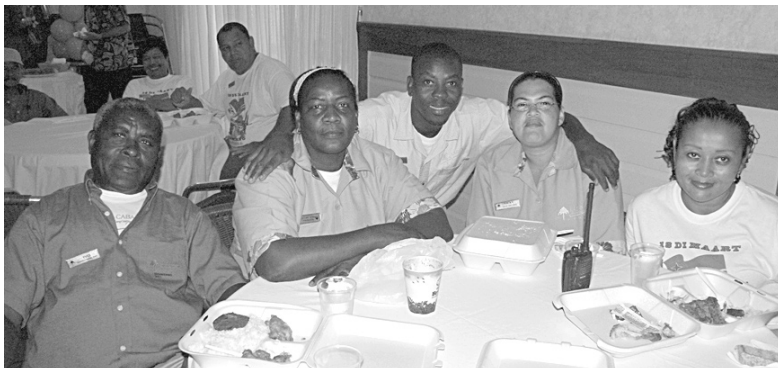
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## La Cabana learns about archeological treasures



**EAGLE BEACH** – In a recent lunchbox seminar the associates of La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club were enlightened and entertained by the representatives of the government's Monument Agency in charge of restoration and preservations of Aruba's historical buildings. The power-point presentation that accompanied the delicious lunch showed the process of bringing architectural gems back from the brink of destruction by means of careful reconstruction, mixing old and new with integrity and utmost care.

Oranjestad and the heart of town is blessed with more than 18 landmark buildings, while St Nicholas has 54 buildings of architecturally historic interest.

The recently inaugurated museum, open in the heart of town, resides in some of Aruba's most important reconstructed and preserved buildings, now making up the important Archaeological Museum of Aruba on Schelpstraat 42.

Pictured here the interesting get-together at the Captain's Table, inspired by Aruba's Flag & Anthem Day. □



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# \*\*\*HUMAN HINTS\*\*\*

## Modern Meditation

Meditation is an attitude exercise. When you purposefully focus in meditation, you entrain and focus your logical and emotional energy on a specific purpose. Your imagination is your link to infinite creation. When you align your thoughts and emotions, you tap into the infinite power of the Human Being, which has long been forgotten.

Many gurus suggest meditation in silence and stillness, which is great if you don't dwell in the physical

world. For the rest of us, becoming still is the last thing on our daily list, right after trying to find a restless sleep for a few hours. When we do find a moment's peace, we can't use it for meditation. The precious moment is so rare and fleeting, it would be wasted on meditation. We all know that our mind continues to race after a hectic day, and it can be even worse when we try to meditate.

The mind can race even more violently when we find a moment to become still. If you don't fall asleep during

meditation, the first tortuous efforts are spent settling your mind. This can take a moment, or it can last until we get frustrated and turn on the TV. As we practice making our mind still, we will become better at it, but who has time to practice mental stillness, on top of everything else we must cram into these short days, now that Time is compressed?

You require neither stillness nor silence to practice squelching the chatter that is constantly distracting your mind. Exercise is a great example. Many people try to distract themselves when they exercise. They put on headphones, watch TV, read, talk, anything to remove the mind from the exercise.

When your heart rate and breathing are elevated, you are presented with the perfect opportunity to still your mind and relax your body. The endorphins that are naturally produced during physical activity make it that much easier for you to achieve bliss during these times, and the endorphins continue to release for many hours after exercise. During exercise, the rhythmic pounding of your heart and deep breathing can

help to hypnotize you into a relaxed state beyond Time.

If noise is an issue, it is alright to practice making your mind still while music is playing. Music evokes emotion, including relaxation, and the right music will help block out the world for a moment. Music can be the vibrational overtone that puts our bodies in a harmonious state, and helps us to still our mind.

Focusing on specific thoughts during meditation will also help to still your mind. Guided meditations can be found for every purpose. There are many within the pages of HumanHints, and you can find lifetimes worth on Google. When your meditation has a specific intention, the energy you invest is more focused and directed toward a goal. Random energy needs a focus in order to be useful.

When you enter meditation with a specific purpose, your mind will be focused on that purpose, and it will help you control your chaotic thoughts. A blank mind is harder to achieve and maintain than a focused mind.

First learn to focus your mind, then you will learn to

empty it. When your mind is empty, you are surrounded by infinite potential for creation.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to [www.HumanHints.com](http://www.HumanHints.com) to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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# The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the stars. The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the

intimate, lovely setting. The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties. Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing, are real crowd pleasers. True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup

is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing. The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly-decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!



The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon. Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying. Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining

room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song. Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. [www.manchebo.com/steakhouse](http://www.manchebo.com/steakhouse)

## Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of Beach Cuisine. Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace, raising the restaurant to a must-visit, must-try status.



The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair. From Sun-Sational Salads, to

Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs. The Pega Pega tropical & frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, daiquiris, coladas and margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex on the Beach and Mudslides, making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get! The Pega Pega, one of Aruba oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.



## Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico

Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price.

The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge. Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. Chef George accepted the Shoco Award, the national award of excellence, and Aruba's top professional decoration, in the tourism industry. □



# The New Climax Band at Garufa



ORANJESTAD -- On Friday Night Garufa Cocktail & Cigar Lounge was hopping with the music of the New Climax Band enticing the crowd of locals and tourists to dance and have a good time. With Blanca and David at the bar, drinks were flowing, and the club ambiance exciting.



While the New Climax Band is best known for its Carnival performances, it played many other musical genres besides Soca & Calypso, delivering an excellent repertory of Latin favorites in general including a hot potpourri of Salsa and Merengue. Garufa Cigar & Cocktail Lounge, on Wilhelminastraat, across El Gaucho Restaurant has been a popular night spot for lovers and friends, since it opened its doors in December of 1998.



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Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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Fine & Affordable Dining at Pam Pam Restaurant

## Meet Chef Ludwich Samson and his exquisite menu now unveiled!



Nestled in the quiet neighborhood of Boegoeroei, Perle d'Or apartment complex houses Dutch students and vacationers, as well as a cozy garden eatery, Pam Pam Restaurant & Bar. Aiming to attract a more diverse clientele, Pam Pam has recently adopted a more upscale dining concept. In order to pilot this new concept, rising local chef Ludwich Samson was brought on board, and in just two months on the job, he has

more than proven his worth.

Laid-back, refreshingly young, and ambitious, Ludwich began his career as a chef by enrolling in Aruba's hospitality and culinary arts school—the best decision he has ever made, he wholeheartedly claims. With ten years in the kitchen and three years as a chef, Ludwich has developed an impressive arsenal of cooking skills. He attributes the majority of his growth as a chef to his years

of working under his mentor, Vittorio Muscarllo, owner of Hostaria Da'Vittorio and one of the most highly respected chefs on Aruba.

In his two months with Pam Pam, Ludwich has entirely remodeled the kitchen to make it more efficient. He has also created a whole new menu featuring particularly unique dishes in order to distinguish Pam Pam from the endless number of restaurants along Aruba's hotel strip. While the menu still offers Dutch snacks and typical Dutch platters like sate to appease the many Dutch interns residing at Perle d'Or, the rest of the menu offers upscale fusion cuisine. Lemon grass and chillies give several seafood dishes a Thai flair; homemade ravioli and beef carpaccio salute Italy; crustacean ceviche adds a Peruvian element; and Indonesian spices add zest to a handful of casual main dishes.

Ludwich also craftily adds little unexpected twists to some classic dishes, elevating the uniqueness of his menu. One of his personal favorites is his porcini-crusted filet mignon served with a thyme red-wine reduction. He also delights in the fact that most diners have a hard time figuring out the sweet and spicy deliciousness of his signature crustacean platter. Other interesting interpretations include lump-crab lollipops, chicken cordon blue unorthodoxly stuffed with ricotta and bacon, and for dessert, tiramisu that promises an untraditional layer of decadent Bailey's chocolate mousse.

Needless to say, Ludwich is creative in the kitchen and works extremely hard, currently putting in 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week; but he insists that this is not what makes a good chef good. "I simply love what



I do for a living," confides Ludwich, and this is what guarantees success in the kitchen and contented diners. Of course, being a chef can be downright stressful, but Ludwich thrives on the rush of adrenaline on busy nights. And when he peers out of the kitchen and sees a restaurant full of people enjoying their meals, he experiences immense satisfaction. For reservations call: 5877710 or 7483848, or visit us at [www.pampamaruba.com](http://www.pampamaruba.com). ☐



# Cell Phones and Health

One of the most common sights we see these days, is that of people with their mobile phones next to their ears. A boon for better communication, cell phone usage nonetheless has many health hazards. Various studies indicate that the emissions from a cell phone can be extremely harmful, causing genetic damage, tumors, memory loss, and increased blood pressure and weakening of the immune system. This is alarming information, and one has to take into account all these factors..

## CELL PHONES AND HEALTH

Though there is no evidence of cell phones causing cancer or any such illness, but the suspicion, or fear of the same is not baseless either. The electromagnetic radiation from cell phones does have a potential link to cancer. The fact that this radiation is invisible, intangible, and enters and leaves our bodies without our knowledge makes it even more intimidating.

### Possible hazards:

- \* Two minutes of exposure to emissions from mobile phones can disable a safety barrier in blood causing proteins and toxins to leak into the brain, could increase chances of developing Alzheimer's multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's. (Scientists at Sweden's Lund University)
- \* Scientists say exposure to the phones' low-level radiation causes red blood cells to leak hemoglobin and can lead to heart disease and kidney stones.
- \* Recent studies suggesting

a link between cell-phone use and brain tumors, and the possibility that the microwaves could ignite petroleum fumes at gas stations.

## SPECIFIC HEALTH CONCERNS

### Cancer / Tumors

Studies have been conducted suggesting that rats that have been exposed to microwaves similar to the sort generated by mobile phones but more powerful, showed breaks in their DNA which could indicate an adverse effect. Also, mice exposed to radiation for 18 months developed brain tumors. Though of course, these studies are not concrete proof.

### Blood Pressure

It was observed that people using cell phones were prone to high blood pressure. Again, there isn't any concrete evidence of the same.

### Pregnancy

A study at the University of Montpellier in France was carried out on 6000 chick embryos and suggested that the heavily exposed chick eggs were five times less likely to survive than the control group. This study raised questions about possible effects on pregnant women but it has not yet appeared in peer-reviewed scientific literature or been reproduced, so its findings are difficult to assess.

### Headaches, Heating Effects, Fatigue

A study brought out that longer the people used mobile phones, the more likely they were to report symptoms such as hot ears, burning skin, headaches and fatigue. The study did not include a control group (that is people who do not use mobile phones, to make a comparison); therefore the symptoms reported could have been caused by any number of other factors in the mobile phones users' environment, such as working with computers, stress, driving or reading.

### Memory

There have been various studies into the connection between mobile phones and memory loss. A study looked into the effect of radiofrequency (RF) on the section of rats' brains that is linked with the memory. The results showed that RF could modify signals in the cells in a part of the brain that is responsible for learning and short term memory.

### Posture (holding phone between raised shoulder and ear)

Some researchers claim that holding a mobile phone between the raised shoulder and the ear could have a damaging effect on muscles, bones, tendons and discs. These problems would apply equally to a cordless phone or a landline phone as to a mobile phone and are the effect of bad posture.

**Mobile Phones and Children**  
Because of their smaller heads, thinner skulls and higher tissue conductivity, children may absorb more energy from a given phone than adults.

### PREVENTION TIPS

- \* Cell phones should be used for emergencies, and not for long conversations.
- \* A small chip-like cell phone microwave radiation protection device is available, which has the ability to absorb electromagnetic energy waves from your mobile phone. It



helps in reducing the potential harmful effects of these emissions to the human body.

\* Using a mobile headset is a good idea, you don't have to hold phones next to your ears all the time

\* Use a hands free mobile car kit while driving, without taking your hands off the steering wheel

## THE WHO (World Health Organisation) RULES

\* Mobile phone users should limit their exposure to harmful radio frequencies by cutting the length of calls.

\* Hands-free devices cut exposure by keeping the instrument away from the head and body.

\* Driving cum mobile phone talking should be banned.

\* Mobile phones should not be used in Intensive Care Units of hospitals as they can pose a danger to patients by interfering with the working of pacemakers and defibrillators.

\* People with hearing aids should not use mobile phones.

\* Base stations, which have low powered antennae on their terrace to communicate with cell phones, should not be located near children's schools and playgrounds.

## CELL PHONES WHILE DRIVING

Studies indicate that a lot of car accidents have happened, while the driver was on the

phone. This is because while driving, one obviously needs to concentrate, and talking on a phone doesn't help. Some countries like Portugal have banned the use of cell phones, which may not be very practical, as their main use is to be reachable while you are on the move. Thus, it is important to take certain precautions while driving:

\* Position your phone within easy reach so that you don't have to take your eyes off the road.

\* Get to know the features of your cell phone - speed dial, redial, voice mail, they can be your lifesaver. But don't dial and drive at the same time. Use a hands free kit.

\* Avoid using a phone when road conditions are hazardous or traffic is heavy. You can let your voice mail take messages and then call back later.

\* Don't engage in stressful conversations that may distract your attention from the road.

\* Don't take notes or look up phone numbers whilst driving, wait till you can pull over.

\* User abbreviated speed dialing. In fact, voice activated dialing is even better. It leaves both hands free. Frequently called numbers can be programmed.

\* Have an answering machine installed that could take messages until you can return the calls. Let your co-passenger handle the calls if you are not travelling alone.





# Demise of coral, salamander show impact of Web

By MICHAEL CASEY,  
AP Environmental Writer

DOHA, Qatar – The Internet has emerged as one of the greatest threats to rare species, fueling the illegal wildlife trade and making it easier to buy everything from live baby lions to wine made from tiger bones, conservationists and law enforcement officers said Sunday.

The Web's impact was made clear at the meeting of the 175-nation Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, or CITES. Delegates voted overwhelmingly Sunday to ban the trade of the Kaiser's spotted newt, which the World Wildlife Fund says has been devastated by the Internet trade.

A proposal from the United States and Sweden to regulate the trade in red and pink coral — which is crafted into expensive jewelry and sold extensively on the Web — was defeated. Delegates voted the idea down mostly over concerns the increased regulations might impact poor fishing communities.

Trade on the Web poses “one of the biggest challenges facing CITES,” said Paul Todd, a campaign manager for the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

“The Internet is becoming the dominant factor overall in the global trade in protected species,” he said. “There will come a time when country to country trade of large shipments between big buyers and big sellers in different countries is a thing of the past.”

The IFAW has done several surveys of illegal trade on the Web and a three-month survey in 2008 found more than 7,000 species worth \$3.8 million sold on auction sites, classified ads and chat rooms, mostly in the United States but also Europe, China, Russia and Australia. Most of what is traded is illegal African ivory but the group has also found exotic birds along with rare products such as tiger-bone wine and pelts from protected species like polar bears and leopards. A separate 2009 survey by the group Campaign Against the Cruelty to Animals targeted

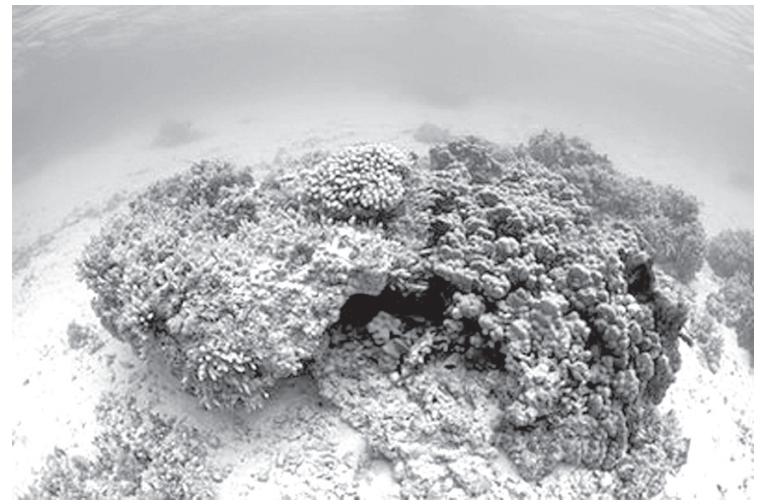
the Internet trade in Ecuador, finding offers to sell live capuchin monkeys, lion cubs and ocelots.

“As the Internet knows no borders, it causes several new problems regarding the enforcement of the protection of endangered species,” the group said in its report.

John Sellar, CITES' chief law enforcement officer, argued the impact of the Web was overblown and that many species that appear illegal may in fact may be legal. He also said many big traders were reluctant to use the Internet, since payments can be traced and they can be ensnared in undercover operations.

“There seems to be little evidence that there are commercial operations using the Internet,” Sellar said. “Although the risks may be small depending on which country you are living in, you can be identified when using the Internet. So there are clearly risks there.”

Still, a CITES committee endorsed an e-commerce proposal Sunday that calls on governments to draft measures



In this Nov. 26, 2009 photo, orange-colored ringed rice coral, or montipora patula, is seen in waters off Waimanalo, Hawaii. Ringed rice coral is among 82 coral species the federal government is considering listing as endangered or threatened.

(AP Photo/Keoki Stender)

to address the Internet trade and law enforcement agencies to dedicate a unit to focus on it.

The private sector has also moved to limit the illegal trade.

EBay, which was singled out in the IFAW survey as being a main source of much of the ivory sales, said in a statement that it instituted a complete ban on the ivory trade in 2008, which activists said has helped slow the trade in tusks on the Web.

The newt is a textbook example of what can happen to one species through trade on the Web. According to a study by the WWF, the black and brown salamander with white spots is coveted in the pet trade. They number only around 1,000 and live in Iran's Zagros Mountains. About 200 have been traded annually over the years, mostly through a Web site operated out of Ukraine. Their population has fallen 80 percent.

“The Internet itself isn't the threat, but it's another way to market the product,” said Ernie Cooper, who spearhead the investigation into the newt for TRAFFIC Canada. “Most people are not willing to pay \$300 for a salamander. But through the power of the Internet, tapping into the global market, you can find buyers.”

The red and pink coral, which consist of 32 species, are harvested in deep Mediterranean waters and turned into expensive jewelry either in Italy or cheaper place like Taiwan and China,

according to the marine conservation group SeaWeb.

It is the most widely traded and valuable of all precious corals but has no international protection, resulting in a brisk international trade in the species, the group said.

Opposition to the coral proposal was led by Japan, which also successfully spearheaded efforts last week to defeat a proposed ban on the international export of Atlantic bluefin tuna, a key ingredient in sushi. They were joined by several coastal states including Indonesia, Malaysia and Iceland, all of whom argued the corals are crucial to the survival of local communities and are not overharvested.

Meanwhile, delegates approved a voluntary conservation plan for endangered tigers that calls for tougher legislation in countries home to the big cats to tackle widespread smuggling and boost money spent on law enforcement.

The British plan also calls for countries to better control tiger farms and to phase out traditional medicine markets which fuel demand for tiger parts. The proposal includes no funding for the 13 tiger range countries, only a request for donor assistance.

The Tiger population has plummeted because of human encroachment, the loss of nine-tenths of their habitat and poaching to supply the illegal trade. Their numbers have fallen from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century to around 3,600 today. □

## Lebanon's liquid treasure is just trickling away

AMSHEET, Lebanon – Rose Hatem's home overlooks the Mediterranean and is just a short distance from one of Lebanon's longest rivers. But twice a week the 60-year-old has to buy water for her daily needs.

“I have been buying in water since I moved here 14 years ago,” Hatem told AFP in the picturesque village of Amsheet, north of the Lebanese capital Beirut. “In the summer, when demand is high, I'm often left without a drop.” Hers is a story repeated across Lebanon, one of the rare countries in the Middle East considered relatively rich in water. But many people still have to buy it because of a lack of a proper supply network and effective conservation.

Experts warn that unless Lebanon takes proper measures to protect its precious water resources, little will be left for future generations as the population, which currently stands at four million, increases.

Fadi Comair, who heads hydraulic and electrical resources at the energy and water ministry, said that unless the problem is addressed -- and quickly -- Lebanon could even run dry within four years.

“There is no miracle solution,” he said. “We need to build dams, artificial lakes, a new network and work hand in hand with the private sector. “If you take into account population increase and climate change, we have enough water to last us another four years, until 2015,” Comair said.

It is a warning that hits home hard where it hurts the most.

“As we celebrate World Water Day on Monday we must reflect on the fact that Lebanon should be exporting this resource rather than sitting by and watching it slowly diminish,” said Antoine Issa, head of the local council in Amsheet.

“This is a blessing and we have no idea how to preserve it.”

The tiny country bordering Syria and Israel has no fewer than 40 major streams, 2,000 springs and numerous waterfalls that form each year with the melting snow.

But the 1975-1990 civil war and years of political unrest have relegated the water issue to the backburner. Water rights are also a constant source of dispute between Lebanon and Israel, where the resource is even more scarce.

Comair said Lebanon annually has an average 2.1 billion cubic metres (73.5 billion cubic feet) of renewable hydraulic resources.

“We use about a billion of that as drinking water or for irrigation and industrial purposes,” Comair said. “The rest -- meaning more than half -- is dumped in the Mediterranean.”

The fact that much of the country's sewage is channelled into the sea rather than recycled compounds Lebanon's water problem, he said. “Not only are we polluting the Mediterranean but this water is very valuable economically and could be used for irrigation or other purposes,” Comair said. □



# Jacoba expects more Haitians to register

COLE BAY--Antillean Justice Minister Magali Jacoba expects many more undocumented Haitians to register for protection here than in Curaçao.

With more than 600 having applied for temporary immunity from repatriation this week, Haitians here have already outnumbered the 170 Haitians in Curaçao who registered for the same status. Curaçao ended its registration Monday while St. Maarten began registering undocumented Haitians the same day.

"In Curaçao, it's not going as well as here," the minister said Friday during a visit to the Salvation Army building in Cole Bay. It was one of two stops for her on a one-day visit to St. Maarten. Workers there told Jacoba it was a "slow day," with fewer than 10 persons awaiting registration. The minister still expects more than 1,200 Haitians who would have fallen under the Brooks Tower Accord (BTA) Category Three to apply for protection from immigration controls that have already resumed. Registration ends on

March 31.

Police and Immigration officers arrested 14 persons Tuesday for being undocumented.

Only two groups of undocumented Haitians will be safe from controls until the end of the year: those who arrived in the Netherlands Antilles after January 1, 2006, and before January 12, 2010; and those who arrived before 2006 and tried but failed to get protection under BTA.

Haitian men, women and children who could have qualified for BTA protection, but didn't apply can only stay until August 31.

The Central Government announced in February that it would allow Haitians who live here without proper documents to stay in the Antilles longer while international aid workers help to rebuild Haiti after the January 12 earthquake.

The Central Government has taken a "carrot and stick"

approach to dealing with undocumented Haitians: they either register to stay here a few months longer, or they are repatriated immediately for refusing to register.

Justice Ministry workers handed out 148 temporary residence permits and identity sheets Monday, while about 19 persons were asked to return with their passports. Persons who could have obtained BTA permits (98) outnumbered those who couldn't have (50) almost two-to-one on the first day. Figures for the first week of controls were not available. The document shows when the holder must leave. It also includes a disclaimer that threatens repatriation if the holder is found to have submitted false information.

"So far, it's going well," Jacoba said about Haitian registration. Tiara Haselhoeft said earlier this week that they hoped to register at least 2,000

persons.

Only Dutch St. Maarten residents are safe from controls and only while they are on the Dutch side.

The Central Government is taking a hard-line stance against forged documents. On Thursday a Haitian man was held immediately for repatriation at the police station for trying to collect a BTA permit using a false passport.

"This is going to have people again thinking it's a trap," said Jacoba defending officers for "doing their job" in detaining the unidentified man and encouraging applicants to "do the right thing." "This is a serious project; we take this seriously. You cannot expect to get a permit if your documents are false."

She said Haitians seemed to be shying away from registering, but it was better for them to get their permits than not. □

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## Richards suggests delaying today's budget debate

PHILIPSBURG--In keeping with good governance, the draft 2010 budget that has undergone some significant changes should be sent back to the Central Committee for handling and today's Island Council meeting scheduled to approve the budget should be postponed for a few days, is Island Council Chairman Lt. Governor Franklyn Richards' opinion.

He was responding to a query by the opposition Democratic Party (DP) about the National Alliance (NA)/Heyliger coalition bypassing the Central Committee and sending the modified draft budget directly to the Island Council. In his Friday letter to the DP faction, Richards said the coalition had followed the correct procedure by first submitting the draft budget to the Central Committee before sending it on to the Island Council.

He also added that there was no provision in the Islands Regulation ERNA that required the draft budget to be resubmitted to the Central Committee after changes were made by government, before it was tabled in the Island Council.

In spite of this contention, Richards agreed that a postponement for review of the changes would be in keeping with good governance practices.

"After all, it doesn't seem possible for Island Council members to reach a good understanding of the proposal during the public session. A Central Committee session would therefore also lead to a more expeditious Island Council

meeting."

However, he noted that since there were no provisions in the ERNA for sending changes in the draft budget back to the Central Committee, the decision to do so would have to be taken by the Island Council.

"As I said, I would welcome it if the Island Council decides to do so," said Richards. "In that case the budget debate in public could be postponed for several days for a Central Committee meeting to be called in the meantime."

He noted that it was in everyone's best interest for the draft budget to be handled "energetically and carefully."

Whether the coalition will request that the meeting be postponed until later in the week is not certain. However, the opposition is standing firm on its point that such a major change – about 16 per cent of the already late budget – should be resubmitted to the Central Committee.

No copy of the draft budget with the changes made by the coalition after the Central Committee debate in February has been sent to the opposition or the Island Council.

DP leader Island Councilwoman Sarah Wescot-Williams had said earlier last week that her party was not even sure whether the answers received to the more than 200 questions about the first draft of the budget were still valid, considering the changes about which the DP had learnt. □



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# Presidente Ecuador dice que pidió renuncia a sus ministros

QUITO (Reuters) - El presidente de Ecuador, Rafael Correa, dijo el sábado que pidió la renuncia a sus ministros y funcionarios gubernamentales como parte de un proceso de cambio de su Gobierno para los próximos tres años.

Correa, quien asumió el cargo por primera vez en enero del 2007, reconoció que existen retrasos en algunos proyectos claves de su plan de trabajo en áreas estratégicas del socio más pequeño de la OPEP.

“Se decidió hacer lo que se llama una crisis de gabinete, es decir solicitar la renuncia de todos los ministros y altos funcionarios para que el presidente (...) tenga la libertad de hacer los reemplazos que considere necesario”, dijo el mandatario durante su informe de gestiones en una pequeña ciudad al norte del país.

El mandatario no dio detalles sobre los cambios que realizaría en su Gabinete ni los plazos en los cuáles serían reemplazados los funcionarios. La decisión se adoptó a inicios de semana durante una reunión de Correa con el buró político del Gobierno y tras realizar un análisis de los tres años de administración.

El mandatario dijo que existen retrasos en la ejecución de una política agraria que beneficie a los sectores campesinos y una demora en la renegociación de los contratos con las petroleras que operan en el país.

Ecuador negocia con las firmas petroleras nuevos contratos para convertir a las compañías sólo en operadoras de los yacimientos, dejando de lado su actual condición de socios, pero el proceso ha sido extendido en sus plazos por varias ocasiones. □



Imagen de archivo del presidente ecuatoriano, Rafael Correa, en una ceremonia en la Universidad de Uruguay en Montevideo. 2 Mar 2010. REUTERS/Carlos Pazos

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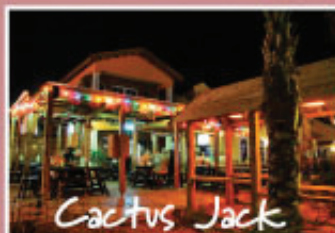


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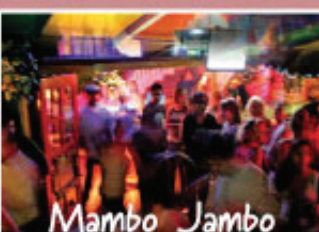
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